

OFAH ZONE "H" report for BPSA Stu Paterson – July 2024

**"opinions expressed in this report
are not necessarily those of BPSA, its
members or directors"**



HATCHERY PROGRAM ALIVE AND WELL:

In mid June Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) and the OFAH signed an agreement allowing the OFAH continue its delivery of the Community Hatchery Program (CHP). With \$1,045,500 in provincial funding over three years, \$348,500 per year, the CHP will continue to support community hatcheries and the community members volunteering to care for local rivers, lakes and streams into 2027. Renewal of the HP is good news for our BPSA hatchery and four other regional hatcheries that belong to the CHP. Hatcheries that all benefit from the funding support this program provides.



Matt Burley Community Hatchery Program Coordinator:

"This funding goes a long way in supporting the volunteers working hard to raise and stock fish into Ontario's waters. Some community hatcheries would find it challenging to remain operating without the support of the CHP funding partnership."

Last year 2,368 volunteers contributed over 50,000 hours of their time to raise and stock almost 8.2 million fish."

A new priority added to the program in this agreement is building the capacity of community hatcheries through

improving volunteer recruitment and retention. The CHP says this new aspect will complement the capital improvement and operational funding available to hatcheries.

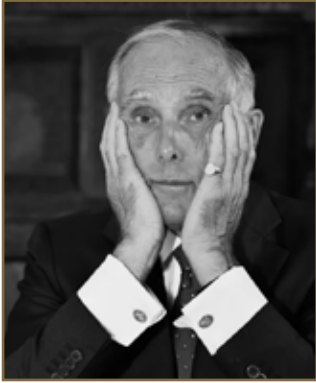


Burley noted *"The OFAH is excited to continue to work closely with community hatcheries and the MNR in support of fisheries objectives and delivering recreational fishing opportunities for Ontario anglers."* For more background on the CHP check page 124 in the 2024 Sportsmen's Outdoors Annual, the magazine of the Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular.



2. CONTROVERSY - PUMPED HYDRO STORAGE PLANT:

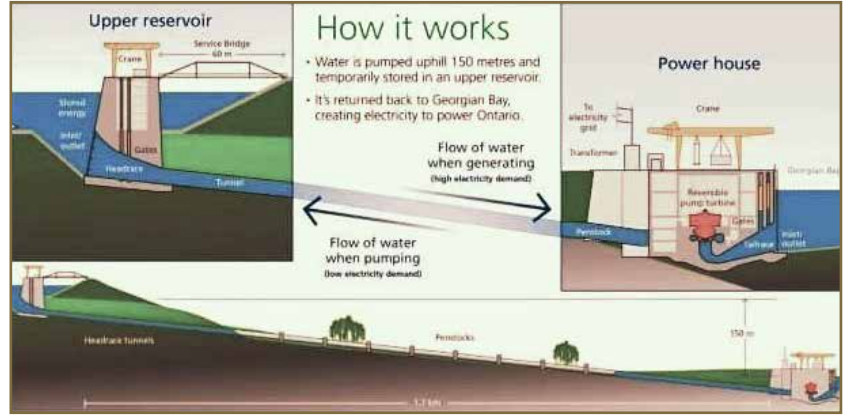
A retired financial advisor has told Grey County council that the proposed multi-billion-dollar Georgian Bay pumped storage hydro project makes no financial sense without huge government subsidies and so “should be shelved.”



Jeremy Wentworth-Stanley raised concerns about TC Energy’s debt level and the need for government-guaranteed prices to buy electricity cheaply and sell it at higher prices, for the project to make financial sense.

Wentworth-Stanley predicts the project will cost many more billions

than estimates suggest. He claims “the Meaford facility could end up costing \$35 billion to \$40 billion. And that Ontario could use that \$40 billion for health care instead.”



TC Energy claims its \$4 billion pumped-storage project, on the Military Training Centre in Meaford, would produce 1,000 megawatts of electricity, enough for one million homes. The Ontario Pumped Storage project would draw water from Georgian Bay into a reservoir on the Escarpment at night, when electricity is cheaper. It would release the water back through turbines to generate power when it is in greater demand and rates are higher.

Citizens group Save Georgian Bay says construction of the project will involve digging up tons of dirt containing chemicals used for decades in explosives during War Games at the military site. The group claims the project will spread hazardous chemicals which would leak into Georgian Bay. It says the facility will destroy fish habitat and kill fish.

From the Save Georgian Bay site:



“TC Energy has a history of low environmental intelligence. The National Energy Board reports 17 of the 39 major pipeline accidents in Canada (from 1992 to 2014) were on pipelines owned by TransCanada or its subsidiary.”

Environmental impact specialist Bruce Rogers says “the facility will increase carbon dioxide emissions, potentially harm the environment and pose a risk to folks who live near it.”

Save Georgian Bay concludes “TC Energy, the Department of Defence and the Ontario Energy Ministry are pushing the project forward despite the environmental harm it would cause and the massive cost to the people of Ontario.”

Save Georgian Bay has won an award for leadership and action in environmental conservation.

Ontario Nature, a 30,000-member charity dedicated to protecting wild species and spaces, presented Save Georgian Bay with its 2024 Corporate Award for “demonstrating outstanding leadership and sound action in the environmental field”.

The award was presented at Ontario Nature’s annual Conservation Awards gala at the Evergreen Resort on the Bruce Peninsula. I have kept the OFAH Land Use and Fisheries Advisory Committees updated on this proposal.



3. OFAH HELPS BPSA:

Check the smiles and you will agree the 2024 BPSA Kids Fishing Derby was a success. Zone H OFAH helped by donating \$250.00 to support this year's Kids Derby which featured prizes for all participants.

BPSA President Carl Jones accepted the OFAH cheque saying the donation was "much appreciated." The money helped with expenses including providing rainbow trout which were added to our BPSA pond for the Kids event and the BPSA/Community Living Derby in the fall.



Zone H Directors feel events like this encourage youngsters to get outdoors and help introduce them to the Canadian heritage pursuit of fishing.



Bridget Ruigrok and her winning rainbow trout with Al Sutter BPSA Hatchery Manager.



Another winner was Connor Thompson who posed with his new bike donated by Laura Lisk of EXP Realty. There were numerous additional sponsors supporting the 2024 BPSA Kids Fishing Derby. Parents passed on their appreciation: "thank you everyone for such a fun day and amazing prizes." *One mom from Kitchener commented "once again our kids had a great time. Thank you to all the volunteers!"*

4. MORE OFAH SUPPORT:

Our Federation Community Conservation Fund approved a \$4,000.00 grant to the Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen's Archery Program. The money has provided BPSA with a large steel container for storing our valuable and growing amount of archery equipment.



Archery co-ordinator Brenda McLean says "The new unit works well storing and protecting target butts, 3d targets etc. It's 20 feet long. We are building shelves inside to better organize and protect equipment. It is a valuable addition to our expanding BPSA Archery Program."



5. OFAH REPRESENTING ANGLERS/HUNTERS:

One of the functions of the OFAH is to represent the interests of Anglers and Hunters. And once again we see an example of that advocacy.

Mark Ryckman federation Policy Manager was among speakers at a recent Ottawa session. The meetings and one-on-one conversations with politicians, staff and policy makers, were about issues affecting fish, wildlife, the environment and conservation. All issues dear to the hearts of outdoors folks. In May, OFAH reps, along with our staff fisheries biologist, were also on Parliament Hill to meet with politicians for Great Lakes Day.



OFAH says *“With support and expertise provided by the OFAH and our conservation partners, discussions focused on strategic ways the Government can continue to invest in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River to ensure our freshwater resources are prioritized.”*

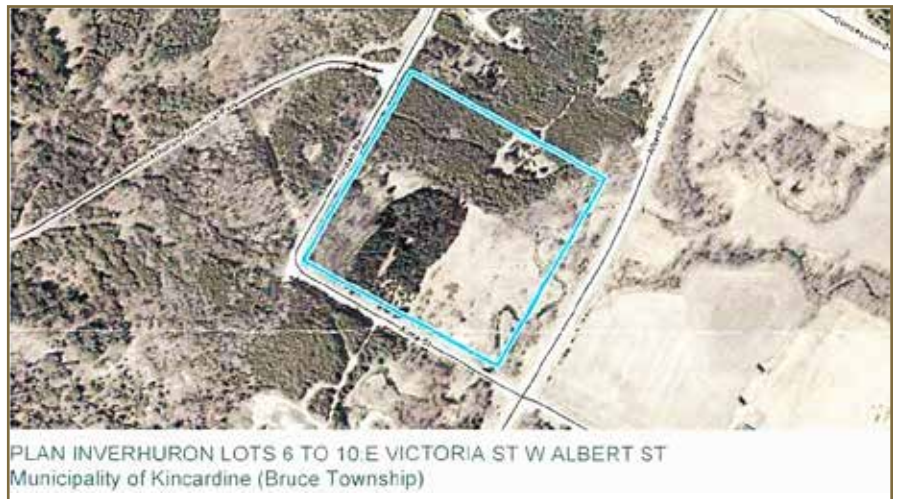
6. KINCARDINE LITTLE SAUBLE RIVER CONCERNS:

The OFAH is warning of environmental damage to the Little Sauble River in Kincardine, if a planned housing project goes ahead. OFAH Fish and Wildlife Biologist Matthew Robbins says “This river has a rich history sustaining local ecology, valued recreation and livelihoods. It is a spawning location for steelhead, coho and chinook salmon, and brown trout.”

A section of this river runs through the proposed development along East Victoria and West Albert streets and “the Little Sauble River has no further capacity to accommodate new development and associated runoff, storm water and sewer discharges.” Robbins offers OFAH help to “work together” with the municipality and suggests it create a new watershed storm-water management plan for that section of the river. Residents such as David Rankin are speaking out about the project, which would include 80 new residential units. “This proposal is disgusting given the proximity to an environmentally sensitive area.” And from resident Jess Barber “Saugeen Valley Conservation manages the watershed that goes through there. It will be hard to develop on such an environmentally exposed site.”

In his letter to the Kincardine Mayor and council OFAH Biologist Robbins says “habitat is critically important to the long-term health of our Province. Woodlands, wetlands and waterways are central to our identities as outdoor recreationists, conservationists and Ontarians.”

OFAH is also concerned about a proposed subdivision at 150 Talisman Mountain Drive, in





Kimberley. The federation strongly recommends against approval of the 370 home “Talisman Subdivision” application, until it is demonstrated that the project would have no impact on the Beaver River.”

The Beaver River is a recreationally and ecologically significant system in one of southern Ontario’s last “undeveloped” areas. A federation letter to Grey County said “No wastewater study was conducted and the fisheries assessment so far exhibited the bare minimum attempt to assess the health of existing fisheries and detect species at risk, and the results were not provided for outside review.”



7. COLLEGE PROGRAMS CUTS:

The OFAH is seriously concerned about the impacts of program cancellations at the Fleming College Frost Campus in Lindsay.



For years, the OFAH and this College enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship that provided opportunities and encouraged two-way movement of skilled workers.

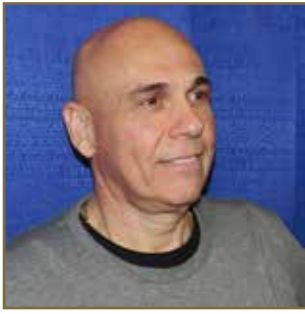
The cancelled programs include:

- Fish and Wildlife Technology;
- Ecosystem Management Technology;
- Environmental Technician; and
- Environmental Technology.

Graduates from these programs often land in biology and land management jobs with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Conservation Authorities, Ontario Parks, the Canadian Wildlife Service, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, private consulting firms, and non-government organizations like the OFAH. They are sought after by employers due to their expertise in species identification, water quality, waste/wastewater management, habitat restoration, and enforcement.



Another victim of the cuts is the popular Conservation and Environmental Law Enforcement (CELE) program. Ontario has been dealing with a shortage of conservation officers for years. The OFAH has lobbied successive governments to train and hire more CO’s to increase enforcement capacity. The decision to eliminate the CELE program will make it even more difficult to recruit high quality candidates into a career as a conservation officer.



Angelo Lombardo OFAH Executive Director: *“These cuts will reduce the pool of qualified candidates needed to fill natural resource jobs. Canada’s biodiversity is facing increasing threats from climate change, invasive species, habitat destruction, and pollution and we are going to need more educated professionals to help steer our country through these problems, not less. The loss of these educational opportunities will be felt across Ontario.”*



The OFAH’s Mark Ryckman spoke to Peterborough City Council regarding the Fleming College cancellations referring to the serious implications this will have on Ontario’s conservation workforce.



“Our country is facing multiple threats like biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution,” Mark said. “We should be driving more people into natural resource jobs, not less, if we hope to steward our country through these crises.”

8. OFAH Invasive Species Awareness Program:

In May a dead Grass Carp was collected by a member of the public in Rondeau Bay on Lake Erie. The fish was removed from the water and disposed of prior to Fisheries & Oceans staff being alerted. No on-the-water operations are planned, however, DFO crews are keeping a close eye on the area.



Grass Carp can grow to 45 kilograms, (99 pounds) reach lengths greater than 1 metre, and live 11 years. Adult Grass Carp eat aquatic vegetation, often uprooting large areas of vegetation which can lead to increased turbidity and poor water quality.

Visit our website www.invadingspecies.com/invaders/fish/asian-carps/ to learn more about Grass Carp.

9. In September 2023, the MNRF posted a proposal to enable the culture and sale of Jade Perch in Ontario.

The OFAH raised serious concerns about risks that Jade Perch pose to our fisheries, which led to the recent decision to NOT add Jade Perch to the species eligible for culture list under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act.

You can learn more about what we had to say at <https://www.ofah.org/.../10/MNRF-Jade-Perch-sep26-23.pdf>



10. COUGARS IN SAUBLE BEACH:

I chatted recently with a farmer who claims he and family members regularly see a cougar on their property between Hepworth and Sauble Beach. He says it is wily and has not been photographed. Is this a cougar or something else?

In Ontario Out of Doors MNRF Senior Scientist Brent Patterson is quoted:
“evidence suggests that most cougar sightings in southern Ontario are related to escaped or released animals of captive origin (such as pets or animals contained in zoos or similar facilities).”



OFAH Wildlife Biologist Matther Robbins:

“Cougars exist in some parts of the province, but there is no evidence to suggest breeding, so resident populations are not established ...most likely, the only wild cougars in the province are young, transient males from western states and provinces, simply passing through the northern parts of Ontario in search of females...males are known to travel up to one thousand kilometres or more to find a mate and establish new territory when they don’t find any females they just keep roaming.”

“Most sightings end up being a bobcat, a lynx, or even a house cat”

11. THE VALUE OF STOCKED FISH:



Some time ago we heard from MNRF fish culture manager Kevin Loftus. He noted the ministry continues to assess existing stocking programs and predicted demand for stocked fish will grow. Loftus suggested the MNRF may need more resources and hatchery capacity.

Loftus estimated the value of MNRF and community hatcheries in Ontario at 4-5 million dollars a year. The estimated economic return from the fish our hatcheries produce...50 to 60 million dollars.



12. OFAH NXT-GEN PROGRAM



BPSA member Natalie Merchalko has agreed to serve another year as an OFAH NXT-GEN Ambassador. 2024 is her 3rd year in the program.

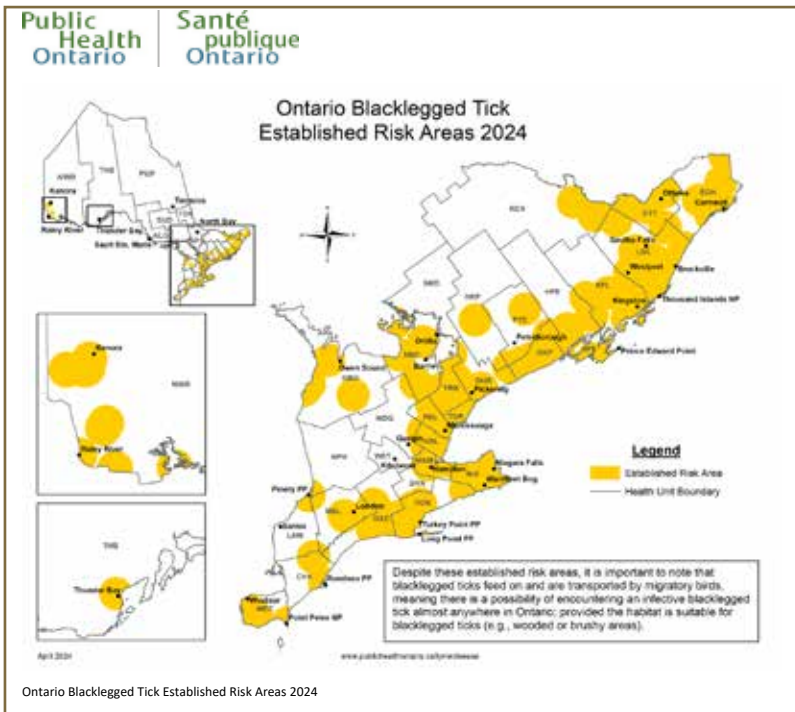
She has been active with our club, seen here helping at a rainbow trout fin clipping session. The program is designed to add younger input to OFAH decision making. If you or anyone you know wants to be a part of the future of conservation working with the OFAH, convince them to apply for our NXT-GEN Ambassador Program.



Ambassadors have the opportunity to provide direct feedback to the OFAH, work on our advisory committees, attend in-person events, and be an influencer in their community. This is a great opportunity for anyone who recently graduated from a conservation related program, wants to work in the industry, or just has a strong passion for the outdoors.

13. LYME TICKS

There are more than 1,500 cases of Lyme disease reported in Ontario every year. Now Grey Bruce Public Health reminds us to stay vigilant during tick season. The organization warns about an expanded risk area for our region for blacklegged ticks, which can transmit Lyme disease to people and pets.



Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Kieran Moore:

“As areas where ticks can be found continue to grow, so do the risks of tick bites and tick-borne diseases. By being vigilant, wearing appropriate clothing and doing routine tick checks, we can avoid tick bites and ensure our trips outside are safe and healthy, in the months ahead.”

<https://oodmag.com/keeping-vigilant-about-ticks/>
#Hunting #Fishing #Outdoors #Tick #Ticks
#BlackLeggedTicks #Precautions #Summertime
#LymeDisease #Anaplasmosis #Babesiosis #DEET
#Icaridin #Pharmacists



14. NETTING

Recent commercial fishing netting in Colpoys Bay near Wiarton has spurred a new round of questions about net placement, hard to spot net markers, rogue nets, netting fish stocked for the recreational fishery and the legality of commercial fish netting in or near sanctuaries.

If you see questionable activity such as fishing in a sanctuary or poaching, please contact the MNRF Tips Line. The tips line is available 24/7/365. Every call to the MNRF TIPS line is reviewed by a Conservation Officer. All information is valuable and appreciated.



15. CHANGE IS COMING

The OFAH is about to undergo changes. The aim is to serve you our anglers, hunters and conservationists, in a more efficient and effective manner. Watch your social media feeds and other news sources this summer for news about an exciting new era for our Federation.

Your OFAH Board of Directors and staff have worked long and hard on this reorganization.

From Ontario Out of Doors:

"Attention OFAH Members! YOUR INPUT MATTERS! The OFAH is proposing changes to our Articles of Incorporation and General Operating By-law. Watch for more information on virtual town hall meetings, where we will provide members with detailed insights on the proposed governance changes, how this aligns with our strategic outlook for the organization, and what it all means for OFAH members. All official documents with information on the proposed changes, details about town hall information sessions, and notice for the member meeting for ratification will be available at www.ofah.org/bylaws. Your engagement helps ensure the OFAH remains well positioned to build the best possible future for fishing, hunting, and conservation in Ontario. Together, let's shape the future of OFAH!"

16. ZONE H MEETING:

The next OFAH Zone H quarterly meeting will be hosted by the Georgian Triangle Anglers. It will be at 10 am on Sunday, July 21, 2024 at this venue South of Collingwood:

Highlands Nordic
1182 Nottawasaga Road
Concession 10 N
Nottawasaga Road S
Duntroon

Thanks to Kat McCulloch for her skillful editing of these reports. We usually have a dozen more topics that we can write about. However, we try to focus on outdoors stories of the most interest to anglers, hunters and conservation minded folks in Grey-Bruce region. Please have a healthy and safe summer. Our next report will be issued in September.

Stu Paterson: since 2003, your OFAH rep for the Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen's Association, Director OFAH Zone H

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